



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Prepared by: Maria Julia Balbi, FAS/Buenos Aires

Date: August 14, 1998

U.S. Embassy

GAIN Report #AR8052

Market Brief - Kosher Foods

Argentina

This report was prepared by the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products. This information is in the public domain and may be reprinted without permission. Use of commercial or trade names does not imply approval nor constitute endorsement by USDA/FAS.

Buenos Aires, Argentina

1.	Market Size	Page 2 of 5
2.	Trends in Consumption	Page 2 of 5
3.	Kosher Wine	Page 3 of 5
4.	Kosher Certification	Page 3 of 5
5.	Import Regulations and Labeling Requirements	Page 3 of 5
6.	Promotion of U.S. Kosher Foods and Beverages	Page 3 of 5
7.	Representative Retail Prices of Kosher Foods and Beverages	Page 4 of 5

1. Market Size

The Jewish community in Argentina is estimated at 300,000 people mainly concentrated in specific neighborhoods in the city of Buenos Aires and its suburbs. There are some small Jewish communities of 30-40 people each in the Provinces of Entre Ríos and Córdoba. Other Kosher food consumers are Muslims and Seventh Day Adventists but they represent only a small portion of the market.

2. Trends in Consumption

Orthodox Jews, approximately 4,000-4,500 people in Argentina, exclusively eat Kosher foods. On the other hand, traditional Jews only eat Kosher foods during religious celebrations: Passover (March/April) and New Year (September/October). There are a couple of new conservative Jewish communities which are not so strict in following the “Kashrut” (Jewish ethic), but eat Kosher foods at all times. Thus, it is difficult to determine the total market for Kosher foods in Argentina. At this point, there is no trend towards non-Jewish consumers being drawn into eating Kosher foods. In general, these products are marked only by Kosher certification symbols which are not known among non-Jewish consumers.

It is estimated that 50 percent of Kosher food products is manufactured locally and the remaining 50 percent is imported mainly from Israel and the United States. Importers usually consolidate one or two containers with a large number of different products for their religious celebrations.

Orthodox Jews do their regular shopping in a few small supermarkets where Kosher delicatessens and other food products either imported or manufactured locally can be purchased.

Some time ago, the first Kosher fast-food “burger” restaurant was inaugurated. However, it did not prove to be successful and it was closed shortly afterwards. Nowadays, there are two Kosher “barbecue” restaurants (parrillas) in Buenos Aires.

The most important Kosher products consumed are: crackers, bakery products, soups, confectionery, candy, canned fish, fruits and vegetables, mayonnaise, chocolate, wine, sparkling wine, caviar, surimi, cold cuts, canned fruits and vegetables, cheese, and cereals. Beef and dairy products are also widely consumed but domestic production is enough for the limited Argentine market.

Similarly to other food products, Kosher food importers require a signed contract with the foreign exporter granting exclusive representational rights for the marketing of the products in Argentina. They are responsible for the promotion of the product in the market and for the follow-up at the point of sale until it reaches the consumer.

Prices of Kosher food products are 30-40 percent higher than regular food products of the same quality. There are some products, like canned vegetables, which can be 100 percent higher.

3. Kosher Wine

Local production of Kosher wine is not significant and very poor in quality compared to the imported product. Most Kosher wine is imported from Israel. Several attempts have been made to import wine from the United States and -- except for Manischewitz wines (fruit flavors) which are being sold in a couple of hyper/supermarkets -- it is hard for importers to come to an agreement with U.S. suppliers on two issues: analytical composition (especially, the percentage of sugar component), and the corresponding analytical certificate (which refers to the chemical and quantitative analyses) of Kosher wines, both items required by the National Wine Institute.

4. Kosher Certification

Regarding certification of Kosher foods, the OU (Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations) is widely accepted. Other accepted certifications are “K” (“Parve”: product containing neither dairy nor meat ingredients), and OK (Organized Kashruth Laboratories).

5. Import Regulations and Labeling Requirements

Argentine import regulations and labeling requirements for regular food products also apply to Kosher foods (for additional information, see the “Generic Import Regulations for U.S. Foods and Other Agricultural Products” report prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs, Buenos Aires, Argentina).

6. Promotion of U.S. Kosher Foods and Beverages

Although the Argentine market for Kosher foods is limited, the best way to promote U.S. Kosher food products in Argentina is working jointly with a few local importers to organize food promotions, and invite food importers and contacts from hyper/supermarkets, the HRI sector, etc. to attend. The objective would be to make the general consumer aware of the health and quality standards of Kosher foods, similar to organic foods. Kosher food seals should also be made known among non-Jewish audiences as guarantees of healthy and high quality foods. However, due to the relative high prices of Kosher foods, marketing strategies should be addressed to customers with a high purchasing power.

Encouraging local companies to visit the Kosherfest is another interesting tool to promote U.S. Kosher foods in Argentina.

7. Representative Retail Prices of Kosher Foods and Beverages

(21 percent value-added tax included)

PRODUCT	SIZE	PRICE (US\$)
Butter	200 g	2.75
Shelled nuts	250 g	4.70
Potato chips	400 g	4.90
“Azimo” bread, sweet	500 g	6.30
Cereals	156 g	5.00
Crackers, Graham flour	200 g	1.99
Lemon juice	1 qt	2.90
Peach slices	820 g	2.95
Honey	16 oz	3.90
Wine, white	750 cc	7.99
Burgers	330 g	2.85
Broiler	1 kg	3.50
Salami (smoked Vurscht without pork)	456 g	6.61
Toasted pasta	400 g	2.19

Kosher Food Importers

For information on Kosher food importers, please contact the FAS office in Buenos Aires, tel: (54-1) 777-8054; fax: (54-1) 777-3623; E-mail: agbuenosaires@fas.usda.gov

Sources of Information

* Embajada del Estado de Israel
Avda. de Mayo 701, piso 10
Buenos Aires
Tel: (54-1) 342-1465/1497/6932
Fax: (54-1) 345-6674

* Rabinato de la Asociacion Mutual
Israelita Argentina (AMIA)
Tucuman 2166, piso 1, of. 9
Buenos Aires
Tel: (54-1) 375-4545/4514

* Promocion de Exportaciones Carnicas
(PROCAR)
Subsecretaria de Alimentos
Secretaria de Agricultura, Ganaderia,
Pesca y Alimentacion
Avda. Paseo Colon 922, p. 2, of. 205
1063 Buenos Aires
Tel: (54-1) 349-2246/2251
Fax: (54-1) 349-2291/2292
E:mail: procar@sagyp.mecon.ar

*Delegacion de Asociaciones Israelitas
Argentinas (DAIA)
Ayacucho 632, piso 6
Buenos Aires
Tel: (54-1) 375-4743/4729/4730/0036

* Camara de Comercio Argentino-Israeli
Avda. Corrientes 1312, E.P.
1043 Buenos Aires
Tel: (54-1) 371-0339
Fax: (54-1) 372-6273.